NUMB. LXXIV.

The SPECTATOR.

—— Pendent opera interrupta ——: Virg.

Friday, May 25. 1711.

IN my laſt *Monday*'s Paper I gave ſome general Inſtances of thoſe beautiful Strokes that pleaſe the Reader in the old Song of *Chevy-Chaſe*; I ſhall here, according to my Promiſe, be more particular, and ſhew that the Sentiments in that Ballad are extremely natural and poetical, and full of that majeſtick Simplicity which we admire in the greateſt of the ancient Poets: For which Reaſon I ſhall quote ſeveral Paſſages of it, in which the Thought is altogether the ſame with what we meet in ſeveral Paſſages of the *Æneid*; not that I would infer from thence, that the Poet (whoever he was) propoſed to himſelf any Imitation of thoſe Paſſages, but that he was directed to them in general by the ſame Kind of Poetical Genius, and by the ſame Copyings after Nature.

Had this old Song been filled with Epigrammatical Turns and Points of Wit, it might perhaps have ſuited the wrong Taſte of ſome Readers; but it could never have become the Delight of the common People, nor have warmed the Heart of Sir *Philip Sidney* like the Sound of a Trumpet; it is only Nature that can have this Effect, and pleaſe thoſe Taſtes which are the moſt unprejudiced or the moſt refined. I muſt however beg Leave to diſſent from ſo great an Authority as that of Sir *Philip Sidney*, in the Judgment which he has paſſed as to the rude Stile and evil Apparel of this antiquated Song; for there are ſeveral Parts in it where not only the Thought but the Language is majeſtick, and the Numbers very ſonorous; at leaſt, the *Apparel* is much more *gorgeous* than many of the Poets made uſe of in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time, as the Reader will ſee in ſeveral of the following Quotations.

What can be greater than either the Thought or the Expreſſion in that Stanza,

To drive the Deer with Hound and Horn
Earl Piercy *took his Way;*
The Child may rue that was unborn
The Hunting of that Day?

This Way of conſidering the Misfortunes which this Battle would bring upon Poſterity, not only on thoſe who were born immediately after the Battle and loſt their Fathers in it, but on thoſe alſo who ſhould periſh in future Battles which ſhould ariſe from this Quarrel of the two Earls, is wonderfully beautiful, and conformable to the Way of Thinking among the ancient Poets.

Audiet pugnas vitio parentum
Rara juventus. Hor.

What can be more ſounding and poetical, or reſemble more the majeſtick Simplicity of the Ancients, than the following Stanzas?

The ſtout Earl of Northumberland
A Vow to God did make,
His Pleaſure in the Scottiſh *Woods*
Three Summer's Days to take.

With fifteen hundred Bowmen bold,
All choſen Men of Might,
Who knew full well, in Time of Need,
To aim their Shafts aright.

The Hounds ran ſwiftly thro' the Woods
The nimble Deer to take,
And with their Cries the Hills and Dales
An Eccho ſhrill did make.

—— Vocat ingenti Clamore Citharon
Taygetiq; canes, domitrixque Epidaurus equorum:
Et vox aſſenſu nemorum ingeminata remugit.

Lo, yonder doth Earl Dowglas *come,*
His Men in Armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottiſh *Spears,*
All marching in our Sight.

All Men of pleaſant Tividale,
Faſt by the River Tweed, &c.

The Country of the *Scotch* Warriours deſcribed in theſe two laſt Verſes, has a fine romantick Situation, and affords a Couple of ſmooth Words for Verſe. If the Reader compares the foregoing ſix Lines of the Song with the following Latin Verſes, he will ſee how much they are written in the Spirit of *Virgil*.

Adverſi campo apparent, haſtaſque reductis
Protendunt longe dextris; & ſpicula vibrant:
Quique altum Preneſte viri, quique arva Gabinæ
Junonis, gelidumque Anienem, & roſcida rivis
Hernica ſaxa colunt: —— qui roſea rura Velini,
Qui Tetricæ horrentes rupes, montemque Severum,
Caſperiamque colunt, Foruloſque & flumen Himellæ:
Qui Tiberim Fabarimque bibunt. ——

But to proceed.

Earl Dowglas *on a milk-white Steed,*
Moſt like a Baron bold,
Rode foremoſt of the Company,
Whoſe Armour ſhone like Gold.

Turnus ut antevolans tardum preceſſerat agmen, &c.
Vidiſti, quo Turnus equo, quibus ibat in armis
Aureus. ——

Our Engliſh *Archers bent their Bows,*
Their Hearts were good and true;
At the firſt Flight of Arrows ſent,
Full threeſcore Scots *they ſlew.*

They clos'd full faſt on ev'ry Side,
No Slackneſs there was found;

And

And many a gallant Gentleman
Lay gaſping on the Ground.

With that there came an Arrow keen
Out of an Engliſh *Bow,*
Which ſtruck Earl Dowglas *to the Heart*
A deep and deadly Blow.

Æneas was wounded after the ſame Manner by an unknown Hand in the Midſt of a Parly.

Hæc inter voces, media inter talia verba,
Ecce viro ſtridens alis allapſa ſagitta eſt,
Incertum quâ pulſa manu———.

But of all the deſcriptive Parts of this Song, there are none more beautiful than the four following Stanzas, which have a great Force and Spirit in them, and are filled with very natural Circumſtances. The Thought in the third Stanza was never touched by any other Poet, and is ſuch an one as would have ſhined in *Homer* or in *Virgil.*

So thus did both theſe Nobles dye
Whoſe Courage none could ſtain;
An Engliſh *Archer then perceiv'd*
The noble Earl was ſlain.

He had a Bow bent in his Hand,
Made of a truſty Tree,
An Arrow of a Cloath-yard long
Unto the Head drew he.

Againſt Sir Hugh Montgomery
So right his Shaft he ſet,
The Grey-goose Wing that was thereon
In his Heart-blood was wet.

This Fight did laſt from Break of Day
Till ſetting of the Sun.
For when they rung the Evening Bell
The Battle ſcarce was done.

One may obſerve likewiſe, that in the Catalogue of the Slain the Author has followed the Example of the greateſt ancient Poets, not only in giving a long Liſt of the Dead, but by diverſifying it with little Characters of particular Perſons.

And with Earl Douglas *there was ſlain*
Sir Hugh Montgomery,
Sir Charles Carrel, *that from the Field*
One Foot would never fly:

Sir Charles Murrel *of* Ratcliff *too,*
His Siſter's Son was he,
Sir David Lamb, *ſo well eſteem'd,*
Yet ſaved could not be.

The familiar Sound in theſe Names deſtroys the Majeſtyof the Deſcription; for this Reaſon I do not mention this Part of the Poem but to ſhew the natural Turn of Thought that appears in it, as the two laſt Verſes look almoſt like a Tranſlation of *Virgil.*

———Cadit & Ripheus juſtiſſimus unus
Qui fuit in Teucris & ſervantiſſimus æqui,
Diis aliter viſum eſt———.

In the Catalogue of the *Engliſh* that fell, *Witherington's* Behaviour is in the ſame Manner particularized very artfully, as the Reader is prepared for it by that Account which is given of him in the Beginning of the Battle.

Then ſtept a gallant Squire forth,
Witherington was his Name,
Who ſa'd, I would not have it told
To Henry *our King for Shame,*

That e'er my Captain fought on Foot
And I ſtood looking on.

We meet with the ſame Heroic Sentiment in *Virgil.*

Non pudet, O Rutuli, cunctis pro talibus unam
Objectare animam? numerone an viribus æqui
Non ſumus———?

What can be more natural or more moving, than the Circumſtances in which he deſcribes the Behaviour of thoſe Women who had loſt their Husbands on this fatal Day.

Next Day did many Widows come
Their Husbands to bewail,
They waſh'd their Wounds in briniſh Tears,
But all would not prevail.

Their Bodies bath'd in purple Blood,
They bore with them away;
They kiſt them dead a thouſand Times,
When they were clad in Clay.

Thus we ſee how the Thoughts of this Poem, which naturally ariſe from the Subject, are always ſimple, and ſometimes exquiſitely noble; that the Language is often very ſounding, and that the whole is written with a true poetical Spirit.

If this Song had been written in the *Gothic* Manner, which is the Delight of all our little Wits, whether Writers or Readers, it would not have hit the Taſte of ſo many Ages, and have pleaſed the Readers of all Ranks and Conditions. I ſhall only beg Pardon for ſuch a Profuſion of *Latin* Quotations; which I ſhould not have made uſe of, but that I feared my own Judgment would have looked too ſingular on ſuch a Subject, had not I ſupported it by the Practice and Authority of *Virgil.*

ADVERTISEMENTS.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Ladies of Quality.
For the Benefit of Mr. Newman, and Mr. Carnaby:
By her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this preſent Friday, being the 25th of May, will be preſented a Comedy, call'd, Love for Love. The part of Ben by Mr. Dogget, Angelica Mrs. Oldfield, Sir Sampſon Legend Mr. Eſtcourt, Valentine Mr. Wilks, Scandal Mr. Booth, Tattle Mr. Cibber, Foreſight Mr. Johnſon, Trapland Mr. Norris, Jeremy Mr. Bowen, Mrs. Foreſight Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Frail Mrs. Porter, Nurſe Mrs. Willis, Miſs Prue Mrs. Bicknell. Being the laſt time of Acting this Play this Seaſon.

For Sale by the Candle.

This Day, being the 25th Inſtant, at Lloyd's Coffee-houſe in Lombard-Street, at 4 a Clock in the Afternoon, only 1 Cask in a Lot, viz. 74 Butts, 22 Hogſheads, and 3 Quarter Casks of new Bene-Carlos Barcelona Wine, very deep, bright and ſtrong, extraordinary good and ordinary, at 20 l. per But, 5 l. per Hogſhead, and 25 s. per Quarter Cask, neat, an entire Parcel, lately landed, and now in Cellars on Galley Key, (fronting the Thames) between the Cuſtom-houſe and Tower-dock. To be taſted till the Time of Sale. Sold by Tho. Tomkins Broker in Seething-lane in Tower-ſtreet.

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